



ISR AND FRS

POLICY AND GUIDANCE

(May 2004)

Chapter 9**ISR AND FRS: POLICY AND GUIDANCE****9.1 Purpose.**

This chapter outlines policy and guidance for use of Inter-Squad Radios (ISR) and Family Radio Service (FRS) radios for CAP members operating within Oregon Wing.

9.2 Description.

ISR and FRS radios are portable, hand-held multiple channel transceivers intended for very short range communications. Their appearance is similar, however the ISR equipment operates on DoD frequencies while FRS equipment operates on civilian assigned frequencies. ISR frequencies are shared with other DoD agencies. FRS frequencies are shared by the general public.

9.3 References.

Current policy and guidance for use of ISR and FRS radios are outlined in Attachments 1 and 2 of this supplement. All CAP members using these radios are expected to familiarize themselves with the content of the letters in these two attachments.

9.4 Operational use.

a. FRS: This type of equipment may be used by CAP members as outlined in Attachments 1 and 2 of this supplement. Note that it may not be used to support SAREX missions, actual or training in nature, however it may be used to communicate with victims in lifesaving efforts.

b. ISR: This type of equipment is preferred, as available, for non-mission related traffic, and is always authorized for use in support of Emergency Services missions. Caches of ISRs are located throughout the state in the most likely areas of need. As more equipment becomes available, more caches will be created.

9.5 Assignment of ISR equipment.

ISR equipment will not be assigned to individuals on a permanent basis. Incident Commanders, Communications Unit Leaders, Ground Team Leaders and such other staff as necessary may obtain as many units, from the established caches, as are needed and available for the support of any CAP mission, signing for the equipment on a Temporary Hand Receipt. All equipment will be restored to the cache when no longer required, or as soon as practicable following the close of the mission.

9.6 Training and use of Call Signs.

a. Unsupervised use of ISR equipment requires that the user have completed at least Basic Communications User Training (BCUT). Any CAP member may operate in a supervised fashion under the direction of a licensed operator.

b. CAP Call Signs, as assigned to the user, will be used. Supervised operators will use the Call Sign of the control operator.

9.7 Channel and feature use plan.

Due to the varying nature of missions and the limited range of ISR and FRS equipment, the Incident Commander, Communications Unit Leader or Team Leader may develop and employ a plan compatible with the type of mission or use. In the case of missions involving a Communications Unit Leader, he/she will be kept informed as to the current plan or changes in the plan. Where necessary, the CUL or IC may direct use of channels or features to avoid interference.



NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
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MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA 36112-6332

9 August 2002

MEMORANDUM FOR CAP WINGS AND REGIONS

FROM: HQ CAP/DOK
105 SOUTH HANSELL STREET
MAXWELL AFB, AL 36112-6332

SUBJECT: Guidance For CAP Use of ISR and FRS Radio Equipment

Until recently, CAP had few options for short-range handheld radio communications. The cost of compliant VHF-FM handhelds and the low performance of 26.620 AM radios meant that many CAP activities that had a real need for short-range radio communications frequently had to do without.

When Family Radio Service (FRS) radios began appearing on the market at a reasonable price, many felt that they would provide just what CAP needed in this area. Unfortunately, at that time both National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and Department of Defense regulations prohibited federal spectrum users from taking advantage of FRS. NHQ had no choice but to advise commanders and field units that FRS radios were not authorized for CAP use.

However, in response to the need for inexpensive short range communications, DoD frequency managers created a service similar to FRS for use by DoD units. NHQ acquired authorization for CAP to utilize these "Intra Squad Radios" (ISR) which are similar to FRS but operate on DoD frequencies. ISR was introduced to CAP communications managers last year and many units began to acquire and use them with great success.

Shortly thereafter, the NTIA and the Air Force changed their rules regarding the use of FRS radios, and established a limited authorization for their use. ISR is still the preferred service for this type of communications need, but FRS can now be used for some limited applications. The following is a summary of authorized use of both ISR and FRS radios by CAP units. This guidance is intended to inform commanders of the applicable AF and NTIA guidance and allow CAP units to begin operations with these radios prior to the next re-issuance of CAPR100-1.

Intra Squad Radios (ISR)

ISR radios are authorized for all CAP units and activities, except that they must NOT be utilized in flight. Only radios specifically manufactured for the ISR service (currently available only from ICOM) are authorized and they may not be modified in any way, including the addition of external antennas or amplifiers.

Because these radios operate only on federal frequencies, personal use of ISR radios is prohibited. For this reason, it is anticipated that wings will develop policies regarding personal purchase of these radios that will ensure they are not resold or used outside of

CAP. Wing DCs have the information needed to purchase these radios directly from ICOM America.

Family Radio Service (FRS) Radios

While ISR is preferred, the use of FRS radios is authorized IAW Air Force Instruction 33-118. FRS radios are authorized for all CAP units and activities EXCEPT for communications directly supporting Emergency Services (actual missions and training) and any other activity directly involving emergency/disaster response, medical communications, or command and control communications.

Some permissible activities would include encampments, air shows, fund raisers, model rocketry, conferences, meetings and non-direct mission supporting activities of a similar nature. They would also be ideal as a hands on training tool for communications classes. They may not be used while airborne.

All FRS radios and operations must meet FCC Part 95 rules, including the necessity of using FCC-certified FRS equipment. FRS radios must not be modified in any way, and modified/illegal FRS radios are subject to confiscation.

GMRS. Note that this authorization DOES NOT extend to GMRS radios. GMRS is another FCC service which may operate on some of the same frequencies as FRS but at higher power. Unlike FRS, GMRS is a licensed service. A license for a specific geographical area is required and fees are charged by the FCC for this service. Use of GMRS radios is specifically prohibited under both NTIA and Air Force Instructions.

Procedures

Operations with both ISR and FRS radios should utilize normal CAP operating procedures, including callsigns. It is anticipated that functional callsigns would be utilized for most operations involving these radios.

To operate either FRS or ISR without supervision, operators must have completed Basic Communications User Training (BCUT) and possess a valid CAPF 76 Radio Operator Authorization.

Both ISR and FRS radios operate on frequencies shared with other users. In the case of ISR, these will be other federal spectrum users; with FRS, it could be almost anyone. When establishing and conducting operations with these radios, operators and managers must be alert and ready to take appropriate action if they encounter other users on the operating channel. Both ISR and FRS are "common use" channels and no user has priority over another. However, to avoid interference, moving to another channel may sometimes be the best course of action. While use of "tone codes" or "privacy codes" will reduce interference, they may not be sufficient, and an organized plan to change frequency if necessary to an alternate is recommended.

For the same reason, CAP's communications on these radios are likely to be monitored, either by another federal agency or by the general public. Make sure your operations are professional and your transmissions something you wouldn't mind being overheard.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Malcolm C. Kyser Jr.", written in a cursive style.

MALCOLM C. KYSER JR.
Chief of Communications



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12 December 2003

MEMORANDUM FOR REGION AND WING COMMANDERS

FROM: HQ CAP/DO

SUBJECT: New AF Policy on the use of FRS Radios

1. Great results from a CAP mission have generated new policy from the AF on our use of the Family Radio Service (FRS). On 27 June 2003, Colorado Wing's Cortez Squadron was called to assist the Dolores County Sheriff in a search for 12 day-hikers lost for 20 hours. One team of hikers had come out of the woods on schedule but the other team, consisting of 10 young girls and two adult leaders, was lost. Two air sorties failed to turn up the lost hikers until mission personnel learned that the hikers had FRS capability. On the third sortie, CAP began calling on a borrowed FRS radio. There was an immediate reply and within a few minutes they had located the hikers trapped in a deep canyon. By 1000 the next morning the lost hikers were rescued and Colorado Wing was awarded 12 "saves" by AFRCC.

2. This mission success prompted the AF to revisit the policy on FRS. CAP's position was that current restrictions are intended to prevent federal activities from using FRS to satisfy their internal communications needs. We felt the policy was *not* intended to prevent use of FRS to contact a victim in order to expedite a rescue. The appropriate AF office in Washington studied the issue and agreed with us that this use of FRS was justifiable and could be repeated when necessary to save lives. 3. This is a significant step forward but we must be clear that this does not mean FRS is now legal for other uses. We still can not use FRS to talk CAP-to-CAP on Emergency Services (ES) missions. Intra Squad Radios (ISR) and VHF-FM radios are designed for those functions. However, this new policy does allow us to use FRS to talk to victims. Also, FRS continues to be allowable for non-ES activities. Please pass this along to your units and let us know if you have any questions. The NHQ POC is Malcolm Kyser. He can be reached at 334-953-7447 or mkyser@cap.gov.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "John A. Salvador".

JOHN A. SALVADOR
Director of Operations

cc:
HQ CAP/CC/CV/CS/XP/DO/GC/LG/EXI
CAP Operations Committee
CAP Region and Wing Comm Directors
HQ CAP-USAF/CC/CV/XO/IG/JA
CAP-USAF LR/CCs; State Directors